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AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT ON THE RISING OF 1647-1648 IN NAPLES

PROBABLY no episode of comparatively local importance in the middle of the seventeenth century was productive of more contemporary literature in more different languages than the rising of 1647-1648 in Naples. A considerable part of this literature is from the pens of eye-witnesses and participants in these stirring scenes, and is, therefore, of the greatest value in forming a correct estimate of the principal actors in the rising. A special interest attaches to the narrative of Giuseppe Donzelli, Baron of Digliola. His *Partenope Liberata, Parte Prima*,¹ was the first account of the revolution and bears the imprimatur of Gennaro Annese, accompanied by the special sanction of the Duc de Guise. It was published in February, 1648, though it bears the date of 1647 on the title-page, and therefore saw the light before the Spanish power was restored and the incidents of the insurrection were at an end. Donzelli was on the point of publishing Part II., when an order from the magistrate forbade the printing of further copies of Part I.; and an effort was made to destroy all that had been already issued.² As a result of this action this book has become exceedingly rare, and has not been accessible to some investigators of the rising.³

Doctor Giuseppe Donzelli, Baron of Digliola, was perhaps better known to his contemporaries as a learned physician and chemist than as a literary man. Born in 1596, he established his reputation by the invention of a sort of medicinal potion and stimulant, of which he made considerable use.⁴ He published many scientific

¹ *Partenope Liberata ovvero Racconto dell' Heroica Risoluzione Fatta dal Popolo di Napoli per Sottrarsi con Tutto il Regno dall' Insopportabil Giogo delli Spagnuoli Parte Prima*. Naples, 1647.

² Soria, Francesantonio, *Memorie Storico-Critiche degli Storici Napolitani*. 2 Vols., Naples, 1781-1782. I., 214.

³ Vogt, quoted by Soria, in his catalogue of rare books, mentions having sought anxiously everywhere for a copy, without finding one. Soria likewise counts it among the rare books. Griffo, also quoted by Soria, says: "It is rarer on this account because the writer indulged in bitter invective against the Spaniards, which made it difficult to publish it again."—Soria, Vol. I, p. 215.

⁴ Orloff, Gregoire, le Comte, *Mémoires Historiques, Politiques et Littéraires sur le Royaume de Naples, publié avec des Notes et Additions* par Amaury Duval. 5 vols. Paris, 1819-1821. Vol. IV., p. 329.

treatises, one of which, entitled *Teatro Farmaceutico, Dogmatico e Spargirico*, first published in 1661, is said to have passed through twenty-two editions. His other scientific works bear such titles as *Synopsis de Opobalsamo Orientali et de Theriaca*, which was published in Naples in 1640, and *Antidotario Napoletano di Nuovo Reformato e Corretto*, also published in Naples in 1649. He was also a member of the Academy of the Discordanti.

Judging from the introduction to the published portion of his book,¹ Donzelli was not only a zealous partizan of the people's cause, but an ardent admirer of the Duc de Guise. These facts lend a special interest to the manuscript portion of his work.

The manuscript of *Partenope Liberata*, Part II., now in the Cornell University Library at Ithaca, N. Y., contains 120 quarto pages. It is a copy of another, itself a copy, which was preserved in the library of Baron Domenico Ronchi at Naples. This manuscript in the possession of Baron Ronchi was sold in 1814, and fell into the hands of the Duke of Cassano, Luigi Sarra. The date of the Cornell Library copy is difficult to determine. It is written in script on heavy linen paper resembling parchment and is bound in boards. It commences with the words: "Doppo cavalcato per la Città con grandissima allegrezza del popolo, il Duca," etc., and ends: "E questo è il termine delle discordie civile, e straniere di Napoli, e del regno, che si sollevarono, e fecero grandissimi danni, che lingua humana ci vorrebbe per raccontarlo." But few copies of the *Partenope Liberata*, Part II., are in existence. Bartolommeo Capasso, who undoubtedly owned several manuscripts describing the insurrection and examined many others in the libraries of Naples, does not mention it in his elaborate bibliographical introduction to the *Casa e Famiglia di Masaniello*.² His silence, however, may be accounted for by the nature of his monograph, which has to do with Masaniello. Of the many secondary writers on the revolution, Mielle³ in his edition of the *Mémoires du Comte de Modène* is the only one to mention the existence of a Part II. and he is simply following Soria.⁴ The latter speaks of a "manuscript of the two parts" in the possession of the Prince of Tarsia, and refers the reader to the catalogue of his library. But as Soria's book was published in 1781, this copy may not be in existence to-day, or if in existence, may be

¹ Donzelli, Preface, p. 6.

² Capasso, Bartolommeo, *La Casa e la Famiglia di Masaniello: Ricordi della Storia e della Vita Napolitana nel Secolo XVII*. Naples, 1893.

³ Modène, Esprit de Raimond de Mormoiron, Comte de, *Mémoires sur la Révolution de Naples de 1647*. 3^e ed. publié par J. B. Mielle. 2 vols. Paris, 1827. Vol. I. contains bibliography.

⁴ Soria, Vol. I., p. 215.

inaccessible to the investigator. The Cornell University Library, then, has one of the very few copies, if not the only one, of this unique chronicle, which Donzelli meant to be a continuation of his earlier work. Had it not been for the government restriction, this too might have seen the light, and Part I. might have had a happier fate.

The concluding words of the preface to Part I. cannot fail to arouse the reader's curiosity as to the contents of the unpublished portion: "In the second part (the end of which will show how well suited its title of *Partenope Liberata*) I promise you events much more strange. Read and marvel."¹ As it begins with the arrival of the duke in Naples, it is natural to expect that it will be filled with fulsome praise of his hero. Either Donzelli's attitude changed by the time he approached the task of describing his hero's exploits, or he desired to follow a middle course in narrating the events, especially in view of the many changes in the political situation. The book cannot be called the work of a vehement partizan. The author speaks of the dissatisfaction of the people with the duke's actions, but in general does not comment on it, either to justify or to oppose their verdict. He is perhaps inclined to spare Annese, especially where he describes the hostility manifested by Annese to the duke and the underhanded means employed for the latter's overthrow. Here would be an excellent opportunity to place himself on one side or the other, but again he refrains from favorable or adverse comment. He rarely speaks of the Duc de Guise, the Comte de Modène, or the other actors to praise or to blame; he leaves that to the reader; nor does he, in short, have any thesis to maintain as to the causes or results of the events he describes. Perhaps his enthusiasm waned as he saw the popular cause decline; or again his failure to fulfil his original purpose, so dear to his heart, of describing the liberation of Partenope from the hated Spaniards, accounts for the entire absence of party spirit. The decidedly impersonal character of the book, so unlike the majority of the accounts of the career of the duke, makes it a valuable commentary on the events described. Any statement, however trivial, which aids in clearing up the tangled maze of intrigue and cabal which surrounds this phase of the rising is to be welcomed. This manuscript may be said to serve such a purpose. The author describes many incidents which are passed over in silence by most of the other contemporary writers. He emphasizes, for example, the hostility of the duke to France, and makes the duke exclaim, on beholding a suit of clothes ornamented with the fleur-de-lis,

¹ Donzelli, Preface, p. 12.

"To look upon the fleur-de-lis is like the Devil beholding the Cross."¹ Again, the duke tells his friends to answer any inquiries as to his birth by saying that he was born outside of France, in a boat, and was baptized at the pier of Naples.¹ Such anecdotes aid materially in forming a final estimate of the central figure in this stage of the insurrection. It is to be borne in mind, however, that Donzelli perhaps reflects the opinions and gossip of the middle class, and that the statements in his book are not to be accepted as solving entirely the difficulties connected with the period. The main statements in Donzelli's narrative are corroborated by the *Mémoires* of Modène, whom Reumont regards as a safe guide for this period of the revolution. When one remembers the admiration expressed by Donzelli for the conduct of the Cardinal Ascanio Filomarino, that "most vigilant pastor, full of prudence, and by nature very obliging and in accord especially with this movement,"² the insertion in his account of the important fact, attested by Modène, that the Cardinal was *forced* to bless the sword of the Duc de Guise, under threat of being dragged through the streets by the mob,³ goes far toward impelling belief in other incidents not expressly corroborated by, and seemingly contradictory to other contemporary accounts. The book is perhaps lacking in arrangement; but it can hardly be said to be devoid of literary merit. The duke is now made the center of interest; now he is suddenly abandoned to describe the prosecution of the war in the suburbs of Naples. The verdict of Haim, which is quoted and accepted by Soria in his *Memorie*, is confirmed and strengthened by a careful examination of the manuscript portion of Donzelli's work: "Donzelli is one of the best historians of the rising of Masaniello."⁴

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¹ Donzelli, Part II., p. 27.

² Donzelli, Part I., p. 12.

³ Donzelli, Part II., p. 5.

⁴ Soria, Vol. I., p. 215.